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ABSTRACT

Methods for analyzing faculty workload, workload issues related to collective bargaining and new federal reporting requirements, and faculty and institutional perspectives about faculty workload are considered. Workload studies are valuable to state legislators concerned with budgets, enrollment trends, and efficient institutional operations. Typical questions that workload studies address and three commonly used quantitative measures are outlined. Two approaches to assessing workload are quantitative measures based on institutional data and measures based on faculty self-reports of how they spend their times. For collective bargaining contracts, workloads are typically defined in terms of credit or contact hours. Teaching-related activities that do not have specific credit hours attached are given equivalencies. A new federal requirement for institutions receiving federal grants and contracts is that the department must report 100 percent of compensated faculty activity for all faculty, even those not directly involved in the federal activities. Reasons for this regulation and objections voiced by faculty members are examined. Some proposals for alternative workload structures are briefly noted. A bibliography is included. (SW)

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Do Faculty Really Work That Hard?

Carol Herrnstadt Shulman

For many years, faculty and administrators have viewed questions of faculty workload with some perplexity. They find it difficult to gather information on how faculty allocate their time and to quantify what information they do receive. Furthermore, since the academic profession is both diverse and unique, a single standard for appropriate workload has not been developed.*

Such lack of information and uniformity is viewed with some misgiving in a management-conscious era. Consequently, there has been a wealth of new literature on faculty workload problems since the early 1970's. Often these studies resulted from state legislatures' demands for information in response to public criticism of faculty performance. These studies have established the methods and findings that underpin most current approaches to workload, *e.g.*, quantitative standards of how faculty allocate their time, derived from information empirically gathered from them.

The need for accountability continues and has received new impetus as institutions must simultaneously maintain institutional quality and increase operational efficiency. Effective use of faculty is an important consideration in this institutional effort. Further, collective bargaining and new federal reporting requirements for faculty necessitate a continuing focus on workload issues.

Accountability through workload

Workload studies serve a distinct purpose in the total task of assessing faculty responsibilities for the efficient conduct of the university. They provide manageable descriptions of what appears to outsiders as an unstructured and unregulated situation, *i.e.*, how much time on and off campus faculty devote to their professional tasks. For this purpose such studies are valuable to state legislators concerned with budgets, enrollment trends, and efficient institutional operations, and to collective bargaining negotiators who need to make clear in an agreement what the lines of professional responsibility are.

Towards these goals, faculty workload studies can be very effective. Yuker (1974) lists the range of questions that workload studies may address:

1. What is the total full-time equivalent staff devoted to instruction, research, administration, student counseling, and public and professional services?
2. What is the relationship between type of instruction and the time spent on various phases of instruction as well as the total time devoted to instruction?
3. What is the average percentage of time spent by faculty members at each rank on the various levels of instruction and the various types of instruction?
4. What proportion of time do faculty members at each rank devote to instruction, research, administrative duties, student services, public services?
5. What differences exist between departments in the percent of faculty time devoted to the several functions?
6. What is the total work week for faculty members by rank and/or by department?
7. What is the full-time equivalent staff per student credit hour?
8. What is the relationship between credit hour or class hour and amount of time devoted to instruction at the various ranks? (p. 6, citing Stecklein 1961)

To address these questions, investigators have developed a battery of methods for measuring and analyzing how faculty spend their time in professional tasks. These methods determine the kind of information that is elicited, its accuracy, and the final product that is presented to the users of the data.

Yuker (1974) summarizes the available methods of analysis. These fall into two categories: quantitative measures based on institutional data; and measures based on faculty self-reports of how they spend their time. In the first group, a variety of methods for representing faculty time spent in teaching are included. These measures fall short of adequately describing faculty workload because they fail to deal with time devoted to other faculty tasks. There are three commonly used quantitative measures:

Credit hours taught gives an often misleading perception of how hard faculty work. For example, to say that faculty teach 12 credit hours per week, implies to an unsophisticated observer that the faculty workweek is 12 hours. Instead, the standard procedure is to multiply that number by 3 to provide one hour for teaching, one for preparation, and one for evaluation, or a total of 36 hours per week devoted to teaching. In addition, this measure does not account for a professor's other responsibilities, such as institutional affairs.

Contact hours includes adjustments for courses that meet more or fewer hours than the number of credit hours suggests. As of 1974, this method ranked second only to credit hours as a base for defining load (Yuker 1974).

Student credit hours/full-time equivalent is a measure of the number of student credit hours per full-time equivalent faculty member. Budgetary analysts find this measure useful because it permits comparison of figures among departments and institutions; in addition, program costs can be compared by calculating the costs per student credit hour (Yuker 1974).

In the second group of measures, faculty self-reports are used to assess how faculty allocate their time. The range of activities covered in this approach depends only on the reporting form used and the faculty's willingness to cooperate. Self-report studies rely on faculty reports of time spent on various activities —the average number of hours per week or per term or the percentage of time devoted to each activity. Since self-report studies cover the gamut of faculty activities they are the preferred measure of most workload studies (Yuker 1974).

How hard do faculty really work? Given the available methodology and the plethora of studies that have been conducted (see Yuker 1974; Romney 1971), the answer should be clear. And indeed, most studies indicate that faculty members work about 55 hours per week during the academic year. But this average may mask a wide range of workloads between minimum work input and time spent in professional activities above 55 hours. Simi-

*"Workload" definitions are also numerous. As used here, workload refers to the total range of activities devoted to teaching, research, institutional responsibilities, and personal professional development related to these activities.

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larly, studies are inconclusive for the most part about whether faculty at different ranks or in different disciplines work longer hours. Workload appears to depend more on individual predilictions than on these other variables (Yuker 1974).

Differences in workload, or at least in workload patterns, do appear among institutional types. Although teaching is the predominant work activity of all faculty members, the amount of time devoted to teaching duties as well as the character of that time varies by institutional type (Baldridge et al. 1978). Not unexpectedly, teaching occupies more than 70 percent of faculty time at two-year institutions; more than one half the time at four-year colleges; and only about one third of faculty time at doctorate-granting institutions. Faculty at doctorate-granting institutions spend between 50 and 100 percent more time in research and graduate training than do faculty at other institutions (Baldridge et al. 1978).

One recent study illustrates the kind of information workload studies can provide. It also uses a somewhat novel approach to the traditional method of faculty self-reporting. In the University of California system (1978), 2153 faculty were asked to report their professional activities on two specified adjacent days of the week or one day plus an adjacent weekend. Reports were kept in diary form and supplementary materials explaining the survey were provided. It was intended that the shorter reporting period would avoid some of the pitfalls encountered when faculty have to rely on their memories to determine how much time they had spent doing what over the past several weeks or months. The survey results suggest that regular, full-time faculty average 62 hours per week overall, split among 27 hours teaching, 23 hours on research and creative activities, 7 hours in university service, and 5 hours in professional activities/public service.

This study demonstrates that large numbers of faculty in assorted ranks and institutions work long hours. It also shows how that time is allocated among different responsibilities. Finally, it validates earlier, more limited reports that faculty work more than 50 hours per week.

State legislatures

State legislators are major consumers of faculty workload information. They find that formulas such as "student credit hours/full-time equivalent" (SCH/FTE) provide a manageable approach to understanding how faculty responsibilities fit into campus management issues.

Such information may become particularly significant in the 1980's as decreasing enrollments focus attention on workloads (Henard 1979). In a recent survey of executive officers of state commissions or boards of higher education, 44 respondents believed that faculty workload will be an issue raised by state legislatures or executive committees, most often in relation to state appropriations for full-time equivalent faculty (Henard 1979). But as of 1979, only 20 state legislatures used a formula including faculty workload as a factor in making appropriations for FTE faculty; seven more states consider faculty workload in making appropriations, although they do not have a specific formula.

When faculty workload data is used in the state budgetary process, the results for institutional support cannot be readily predicted. Injected into the political process, workload data can fall subject to conflicting political interests, as a case study of California's budgetary process for 1972-73 demonstrates:

> The governor's budget was viewed as attempting to reduce the university's budget by using workload data, while legislative anlysis used workload data to support the university's request. The data then became ammunition in the dispute between the two branches of government. (Huther 1974, pp. 42-43)

In this case, the governor's budget referred to a historic nine hours of classroom instruction per faculty member, while legislative analysis used historical data to show that no such standard existed and to demonstrate the complexity of the faculty workload issue. The legislature recommended an increase in the budget to support new faculty positions. One year later, the legislature again used workload data to argue for the addition of 74 new positions to maintain the previous year's ratio of faculty to students because of an increase in student enrollment. Here, the university had only budgeted for 44 new positions. But funds were added to the budget to support the legislature's findings (Huther 1974).

Collective bargaining

Collective bargaining contracts constitute one area in faculty relations in which both sides—administration and faculty—have an explicit interest in determining workload in order to achieve accountability. In most agreements,

> virtually every consideration in determining workload revolves around two tenets: (1) the employer must receive a minimum level or work effort from the faculty member, and (2) the employee has the right to receive extra pay or other compensation for any effort which exceeds that minimally defined workload. (Goeres 1978, p. 2).

Typically, workloads are defined in terms of credit or contact hours. Teaching-related activities that do not have specific credit hours attached are given equivalencies (Goeres 1978).

The Connecticut state college system's contract exemplifies both these characteristics in its description of workload. The contract stipulates that:

> The instructional load for teaching members shall be twelve . . . load hours per semester. . . . No teaching member . . . shall teach less than three . . . load hours per semester. Except where otherwise provided . . . one . . . class hour of science laboratory . . . [and other laboratories] equals three quarters [of a] load hour (Contract for . . . 1979, Article 9, section 9.2)

But faculty workload is not limited to teaching responsibilities, and collective bargaining contracts may also note other faculty activities and make appropriate reductions in teaching workloads to compensate for these activities. For example, Western Michigan University's contract states that "commensurate" load reductions may be granted for such tasks as graduate-level instruction, research, advising, and multiple preparations. These potential exemptions suggest that the need to clearly define workload in contracts creates problems in arriving at concise definitions and stipulations when the workers involved are engaged in a complex array of tasks.

Once the concept of load is defined, the concept of overload can also be expressed in contract terms. In the Connecticut state college system, overload is determined by enrollments in classes. Excess enrollment in a class results in extra load credits for the faculty member teaching that class. For example, enrollment of 43 to 80 students in a three-credit class results in one additional load hour credit, 83 to 175 students in two additional load hour credits, and 176 and over in three additional load credits. Credits thus earned can be used to reduce a faculty member's actual load within the next three semesters.

Faculty perspective on workload

> "I have no taste for the forcing of scholarship into the managerial mould of accountability. . . . This questionnaire tells you nothing about the quality of my thinking and about the depths of my dedication." (University of California 1978, p. 69)

This reply to the University of California's workload questionnaire illustrates the often negative attitude faculty have expressed when presented with the need to cooperate in a workload study. This attitude results from the general belief that faculty activities

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Faculty Workload

continued from page 6

are so multiple, complex, and interdependent that they cannot be atomized to suit the requirements of a workload questionnaire.

While college administrators may acknowledge the truth of this feeling, they are nevertheless faced with the necessity of accounting for the funds they oversee. Most administrators and faculty seem to have developed an accommodation with the need to fill out some form of workload reports, and many state institutions do so on a regular basis.

Federal perspective

But workload can still be a volatile subject, as recent discussions over new federal procedures indicate. The discussions about "Circular A-21: Cost Principles for Educational Institutions," issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in March 1979, illustrate the arguments for and against faculty workload reports.

The OMB circular discusses methods by which colleges and universities determine the costs of federal grants and contracts. Included here are methods for determining how faculty salaries are allocated to different faculty functions, including research grant activity. The OMB Circular requires that any department having a federal grant or contract, use one of two payroll distribution formulas to determine personnel costs for all faculty. In either the "personnel activity reporting system" or the "monitored workload system" the federal government wants "the payroll distribution system to identify all committed cost sharing effort" (Binkley 1979, p. 17). The department must report 100 percent of compensated faculty activity for all faculty, even those not directly involved in the federal activities.

OMB insists that it needs the 100-percent documentation of faculty activity to be assured that it is not paying twice for the same effort. That is, under A-21 universities may recover direct costs associated with professorial and professional activities under federal contracts and grants. In addition, the administrative effort of the same funded individuals is also recoverable but is assigned to indirect costs. The reporting requirement is designed to insure that there has been no crossover between direct and indirect costs for the funded professors and it assures the government that indirect costs for non-funded activities are not being assigned to funded projects.

This 100-percent reporting requirement is new to federal cost reporting and has stirred strong opposition in the scientific community, which is most affected by the reporting system since it garners most of the federal grants and contracts issued to higher education.

Faculty have objected to this requirement on two grounds: First, the documentation effort may not result in sound data, and second, such paperwork requirements dilute federal funds that should be spent on research. In the first instance, scientists contend that:

> Scientists respect data that is based on objective observations and that is properly treated; but since they question the validity and reliability of data that is required in A-21 to document their work, it is reasonable to question the quality of the data that will accrue from even the most conscientiously completed forms. In summary, 100% documentation of work . . . will not provide reliable data and it is an intrusion by the government on the academic environment. (Report of Ad Hoc . . . , 1979, p. 3).

The reporting effort involved in responding to A-21 is substantial and at least one form suggests how complicated and subject to error such reporting may be. This proposed form, labeled "Personnel Activity (Effort) Report," includes a laundry list of categories that purport to break down the types of faculty activity:

Sponsored Activities

I. Sponsored Research
   - A. Federal Grants and Contracts
   - B. Non-Federal Accounts

II. Sponsored Instruction
   - A. Federal Grants and Contracts
   - B. Non-Federal Grants and Contracts

III. Other Sponsored Activities
   - A. Federal Grants and Contracts
   - B. Non-Federal Grants and Contracts

Non-Sponsored Activities

IV. Instruction and Research

V. Research Administration on Sponsored Projects

VI. Departmental Administration

VII. Other Administration and All Other University Services

In the sponsored activities section, faculty must specify what percentage of their total salary goes to the particular activity and what percentage of the total effort each category constitutes. For the non-sponsored activities, only the latter percentage reporting is required (Report of the Ad Hoc . . . 1979, p. 3).

The second charge—that federal funds are being diluted—stems from the belief that so much time, effort, and paperwork activities are spent responding to federal bureaucratic demands that insufficient time is spent in creative research. Abelson (1980) observes:

> Politicians and bureaucrats in Washington seem not to realize that perfect time and effort accountability is a costly delusion. The bean counters drain off funds, spawn a bureaucracy, destroy morale, and hinder progress of research. They do not seem to understand that for research to be vital, creativity must take place over highly detailed bookkeeping (p. 353).

The circular does acknowledge the difficulties in complying with its requirements:

> In the use of either method, it is recognized that, because of the nature of work involved in academic institutions, the various and often interrelated activities of professorial and professional employees frequently cannot be measured with a high degree of precision, that reliance must be placed on reasonably accurate approximations, and that acceptance of a degree of tolerance in measurement is appropriate. (Circular A-21, J 6(b))

Institutional perspective

In the 1980's workload will develop a dual meaning in institutional terms. It will retain its meaning of how many hours faculty work and what that figure suggests in view of the institution's need for effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, workload will refer to working conditions for faculty in which the kind or quality of workload is linked to faculty and institutional renewal.

In line with making institutional operations more efficient, Mayhew (1979) argues that the low course loads of the 60's are not appropriate for the straitened circumstances of the 80's in which colleges and universities will find themselves. Instead, he argues for a course load plan by institutional type: research universities, two courses per semester, doctoral universities, three courses per semester; comprehensive colleges, three to four courses per semester; liberal arts colleges, three to four courses per semester; and junior community colleges, four courses per semester.

Similarly, he argues that class size and student-faculty ratio should be increased because there has been no data to indicate that small classes have significantly more value than large ones. He suggests a class size range of 15 to 100 students and advocates that classes with fewer than ten students should seriously be considered for elimination.

But workload discussions in the 1980's will also need to address the ever-present problem of faculty renewal. With little or

4

no enrollment growth in the 1980's, new faculty will not be hired and already employed professors will need new stimuli to avoid stagnation during this period. One method for fostering faculty growth and renewal during this period is through innovative workload schemes.

Several schemes for alternative workload structures have been proposed. Some of these would serve as rewards for faculty. One approach initiated at the University of Charleston provides for an in-house visiting lectureship. One faculty member receives a one-course reduction in teaching load to serve as a resource person to other members of the faculty. The lecturer offers presentations that relate his or her subject area to various other disciplines (Bevan 1979).

Other proposals include a seminar program for faculty for which one faculty member serves as resource person in return for a reduction in load; and a program to award outstanding faculty with a one-course load reduction and give them the task of working with their colleagues to improve the level of teaching and research at the institution (Bevan 1979).

Similarly, the Great Lakes Colleges Association is launching a project to look at new approaches to faculty activities that stimulate faculty development in a period of employment and enrollment stagnation. One approach to this stagnation is to "deliberately vary faculty work assignments over time with the intention of providing new challenges and generating new interests." For example, a faculty member might concentrate for a year or more on one aspect of his or her responsibilities, such as counseling students or developing new teaching materials. Faculty members might also assume short-term administrative assignments as a break from routine responsibilities (Fuller 1979).

Conclusion

The need for faculty accountability seems inescapable. Institutions, states, and the federal government have a responsibility to insure that their funds are being used appropriately and as efficiently as possible. Although faculty workload studies become repetitive in their documentation of faculty effort, they are a necessary evil in the life of the faculty.

But workload measurement can take on a different, more positive meaning. Workload can be looked at constructively to see what possibilities changes in working styles can offer to stimulate faculty growth and renewal.

This new concept of workload needs to be further developed in the 1980's. That is, the new conditions of this decade may force a change in how workload is perceived and measured, and may necessitate a reexamination of this area.

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